



# AAERG footprints

NEWSLETTER

*Historic Echoes from Past and Present*

**FEBRUARY 2021**

*Special Edition*  
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Developed by:  
African American Employee Resource Group

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2021

February 11, 2021 at 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm - Race Matters: America in Crisis (Short Documentary)

February 17, 2021 at 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm - AAERG Black History Month Kahoot Game

February 23, 2021 at 9:30 am – 11:30 am - Virtual Speaker Event, Dr. Joyce Ladner



## THE ORIGIN OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH THEMES

Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Since 1928, there have been themes associated with Black History Month, which reflect changes in how people of African descent in the United States viewed themselves, the influence of social movements on racial ideologies, and the aspirations of the black community.” In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout history.” Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme. The Black History Month theme for 2021 is “Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity.” Source: Association for the Study of African American Life and History



## AFRICAN AMERICAN FACTS: DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ **Black History began** as “Negro History Week” in 1926 by **Dr. Carter G. Woodson** African American scholar, historian, educator, and publisher.
- ✓ **Famous Protestors and Activists:** While **Rosa Parks** is credited with helping to spark the civil rights movement when she refused to give up her public bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955—inspiring the Montgomery Bus Boycott—the lesser-known **Claudette Colvin** was arrested nine months prior for not giving up her bus seat to white passengers.
- ✓ **First African American to go to Space:** In 1992, **Dr. Mae Jemison** was the first African American woman to go to space, boarding the space shuttle Endeavour.
- ✓ **First African American Billionaire:** The first African American billionaire was **Robert Johnson**. He became a billionaire when he sold his founded cable station, Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 2001.
- ✓ **First African American Female Billionaire:** The first African American female black billionaire was **Orpah Gail Winfrey** and she was the only black billionaire from 2004 to 2006.
- ✓ **First African American President:** In 2008, **Barack Obama** became the first African American President of the United States.
- ✓ **First African American Vice President:** In 2021, **Kamala Harris** became the first woman of African or Asian descent to become Vice President of the United States.

# IN MEMORIAM

WE PAUSE TO HONOR THE TRAILBLAZERS AND PIONEERS IN THIS SECTION WHO HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR US TO BE AFFORDED EVERY OPPORTUNITY AND FROM THERE WE'VE PASSED IT ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.



## Elijah Eugene Cummings

American politician and civil rights advocate who served in the United States House of Representatives for Maryland's 7th congressional district from 1996 until his death in 2019. Cummings served in the Maryland House of Delegates from 1983 to 1996. The district he represented included just over half of the city of Baltimore, most of the majority-black precincts of Baltimore County, as well as most of Howard County. He will be remembered as a dedicated public servant who was a fearless leader and a fighter for justice.

*"Most people who are hating on you, they are not worried about where you are. They're worried about where you're going." – Elijah Cummings*

January 18, 1951 – October 17, 2019



## John Lewis

On July 17, 2020, the legendary civil rights leader John Lewis died at the age of 80. His legacy of getting into "good trouble" to oppose system racism is still alive today and will live for years to come. Mr. Lewis dedicated his life to protecting and advancing the rights of Black people in the United States.

## Good Trouble

*"Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society. Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet." – John Lewis*

February 21, 1940 – July 17, 2020



## Cicely Tyson

American actress and fashion model. In a career spanning more than seven decades, she became known for her portrayal of strong African-American women. Tyson received three Primetime Emmy Awards, four Black Reel Awards, one Screen Actors Guild Award, one Tony Award, an Honorary Academy Award, and a Peabody Award.

*"The moment anyone tries to demean or degrade you in any way, you have to know how great you are. Nobody would bother to beat you down if you were not a threat." – Cicely Tyson*

December 19, 1924 – January 28, 2021

# “LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING”

## *The Black National Anthem*

LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING,  
'TIL EARTH AND HEAVEN RING,  
RING WITH THE HARMONIES OF LIBERTY;  
LET OUR REJOICING RISE  
HIGH AS THE LIST'NING SKIES,  
LET IT RESOUND LOUD AS THE ROLLING SEA.  
SING A SONG FULL OF THE FAITH THAT THE DARK PAST HAS TAUGHT US,  
SING A SONG FULL OF THE HOPE THAT THE PRESENT HAS BROUGHT US;  
FACING THE RISING SUN OF OUR NEW DAY BEGUN,  
LET US MARCH ON 'TIL VICTORY IS WON.  
STONY THE ROAD WE TROD,  
BITTER THE CHASTENING ROD,  
FELT IN THE DAYS WHEN HOPE UNBORN HAD DIED;  
YET WITH A STEADY BEAT,  
HAVE NOT OUR WEARY FEET  
COME TO THE PLACE FOR WHICH OUR FATHERS SIGHED?  
WE HAVE COME OVER A WAY THAT WITH TEARS HAS BEEN WATERED,  
WE HAVE COME, TREADING OUR PATH THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE SLAUGHTERED,  
OUT FROM THE GLOOMY PAST,  
'TIL NOW WE STAND AT LAST  
WHERE THE WHITE GLEAM OF OUR BRIGHT STAR IS CAST.  
GOD OF OUR WEARY YEARS,  
GOD OF OUR SILENT TEARS,  
THOU WHO HAS BROUGHT US THUS FAR ON THE WAY;  
THOU WHO HAS BY THY MIGHT  
LED US INTO THE LIGHT,  
KEEP US FOREVER IN THE PATH, WE PRAY.  
LEST OUR FEET STRAY FROM THE PLACES, OUR GOD, WHERE WE MET THEE,  
LEST, OUR HEARTS DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF THE WORLD, WE FORGET THEE;  
SHADOWED BENEATH THY HAND,  
MAY WE FOREVER STAND,  
TRUE TO OUR GOD,  
TRUE TO OUR NATIVE LAND.

By James Weldon Johnson, NAACP Leader

Written as poem and put to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson.  
First performance by 500 school children in their hometown of Jacksonville, FL  
to Celebrate Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

